

Exhibit 264

Feda Abdelhady-Nasser
July 22, 2021

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

SHABTAI SCOTT SHATSKY,)	Case No. 18-Civ. 12355
individually and as)	
personal representative)	
of the Estate of Keren)	VIRTUAL VIDEOTAPED
Shatsky, J ANNE)	DEPOSITION OF FEDA
SHATSKY, individually)	ABDELHADY-NASSER
and as personal)	
representative of the)	
Estate of Keren)	
Shatsky, TZIPPORA)	
SHATSKY SCHWARZ, YOSEPH)	
SHATSKY, SARA SHATSKY)	
TZIMMERMAN, MIRIAM)	
SHATSKY, DAVID RAPHAEL)	
SHATSKY, GINETTE LANDO)	
THALER, individually)	
and as personal)	
representative of the)	
Estate of Rachel)	
Thaler, LEOR THALER,)	
ZVI THALER, ISAAC)	
THALER, HILLEL)	
TRATTNER, RONIT)	
TRATTNER, ARON S.)	
TRATTNER, SHELLEY)	
TRATTNER, EFRAT)	
TRATTNER, HADASSA)	
DINER, Yael HILLMAN,)	
STEVEN BRAUN, CHANA)	
FRIEDMAN, ILAN)	
FRIEDMAN, MIRIAM)	
FRIEDMAN, YEHIEL)	
FRIEDMAN, ZVI FRIEDMAN,)	
and BELLA FRIEDMAN,)	

Plaintiffs,

against

Feda Abdelhady-Nasser
July 22, 2021

1
2 THE PALESTINE
3 LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
4 and THE PALESTINIAN
5 AUTHORITY (a/k/a "The
6 Palestinian Interim
7 Self-Government
8 Authority" and/or "The
9 Palestinian National
10 Authority"),

11
12 Defendants.

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VIRTUAL VIDEOTAPED DEPOSITION OF FEDA

ABDELHADY-NASSER, witness herein, called by the
Plaintiffs, for examination, taken pursuant to
the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, by and
before Karen A. Nickel, a Certified Realtime
Reporter and a notary public in and for the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, held remotely
with all parties appearing from their
respective locations, on Thursday, July 22,
2021, at 9:30 a.m.

COUNSEL PRESENT:

For the Plaintiffs:

Ronald F. Wick, Esq. (Admitted Pro Hac Vice)
Cohen & Gresser, LLP
2001 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20006

Stephen M. Sinaiko, Esq.
Cohen & Gresser, LLP
800 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

For the Defendants:

Mitchell R. Berger, Esq.
Joseph Alonzo, Esq.
Salim Kaddoura, Esq.
Squire Patton Boggs
2550 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

Also Present: Cosette Vincent
Eszter Vincze

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P R O C E E D I N G S

THE VIDEOGRAPHER: Good

morning, everyone. We are now on the record. Participants should be aware that this proceeding is being recorded and, as such, all conversations held will be recorded unless there is a request and agreement to go off the record.

This is the remote video-recorded deposition of Feda Abdelhady-Nasser. Today is Thursday, July 22, 2021. The time is now 13:33 UTC.

We are here in the matter of Shatsky versus PLO. My name is Corey Wainaina, remote video technician on behalf of US Legal Support located at 90 Broad Street, New York, New York. I am not related to any party in this action, nor am I financially interested in the outcome.

At this time, will the reporter, Karen Nickel, on behalf of US Legal Support, please enter the statement for remote proceedings into the record.

THE REPORTER: The attorneys participating in this deposition acknowledge that I am not physically present in the

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1 deposition room and that I will be reporting
2 this deposition remotely.

3 They further acknowledge that, in
4 lieu of an oath administered in person, the
5 witness will verbally declare her testimony in
6 this matter is under penalty of perjury.

7 The parties and their counsel
8 consent to this arrangement and waive any
9 objections to this manner of reporting. Please
10 indicate your agreement by stating your name
11 and your agreement on the record.

12 MR. SINAIKO: Steve Sinaiko, on
13 behalf of the Plaintiffs, from Cohen & Gresser
14 in New York City, we agree.

15 MR. BERGER: Mitchell Berger,
16 Squire Patton Boggs, Washington, D.C., on
17 behalf of Defendants, we agree.

18 (Discussion held off the
19 record.)

20 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We are
21 back on the record. The time is 13:36 UTC
22 time.

23 FEDA ABDELHADY-NASSER, a witness
24 herein, having been first duly sworn, was
25 examined and testified as follows:

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EXAMINATION

BY MR. SINAIKO:

Q. Good morning, Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser.

A. Good morning.

MR. BERGER: Excuse me, Steve.

It would be appropriate and courteous for you
to refer to the witness as Ambassador.

MR. SINAIKO: Okay. Before we
get started, I have one housekeeping measure
for us to go over.

Since we are here remotely due to
the COVID-19 pandemic, we would ask that the
Defendant confirm that, pursuant to Rule
30(b)(4) of the Federal Rules of Civil
Procedure, today's deposition may be taken by
video conference.

THE WITNESS: Yeah.

MR. BERGER: Yeah, we confirm
that.

MR. SINAIKO: Good. And
pursuant to Rule 29 of the Federal Rules of
Civil Procedure, I also want to confirm that
the parties are stipulating that Ms. Nickel is
an appropriate officer before whom to take the
deposition even though she, I believe, is in

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1 Pittsburgh, and I'm not actually sure where the
2 witness is but I'm pretty sure that she is not
3 in Pennsylvania.

4 Can we agree, pursuant to Rule 29,
5 that Ms. Nickel is an appropriate officer
6 before whom the deposition may be taken?

7 MR. BERGER: Yes, so
8 stipulated.

9 MR. SINAIKO: Great. Okay.

10 BY MR. SINAIKO:

11 Q. Good morning. Thank you for being
12 here today. My name is Steve Sinaiko. I am
13 with the law firm of Cohen & Gresser, LLP, in
14 New York City, and I represent the Plaintiffs
15 in this lawsuit.

16 Have you had your deposition taken
17 previously?

18 A. No, I have not.

19 Q. Okay. Let me go over a couple of
20 ground rules for the process so that things go
21 smoothly and we are all on the same page.

22 Will that be okay?

23 A. Yes. That's fine.

24 Q. I'm going to be asking you a series
25 of questions today, and your responses to those

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1 questions will be sworn under oath and under
2 penalty of perjury.

3 Do you understand?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. The court reporter is going to be
6 transcribing everything we say today, so to
7 make sure that we have an accurate and clear
8 record, and especially because the deposition
9 is taking place by video conference in light of
10 the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that we
11 not speak over each other and that only one
12 person speaks at a time.

13 So I would ask that you wait until I
14 finish my questions before you start answering
15 them. And I, for my part, will try to wait
16 until you finish your answers before I ask
17 another question.

18 Will that be all right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. It's also important for you to
21 respond to my questions verbally rather than by
22 nodding your head or moving your hand or
23 whatever, rather than by a non-verbal response,
24 because only verbal responses can be
25 transcribed.

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1 Do you understand?

2 A. Understood.

3 Q. Okay. If you don't understand a
4 question that I have asked you during our time
5 today, just let me know and I will try to
6 rephrase the question or otherwise help to move
7 past whatever misunderstanding might exist.

8 However, the Court will assume, and
9 all of the lawyers in the room will assume,
10 that you heard and understood every question
11 that you respond to.

12 Do you understand?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. At times, Mr. Berger, your lawyer,
15 may object to one of my questions, but unless
16 he instructs you not to answer a question, you
17 should go ahead and answer my question even
18 though there was an objection.

19 Do you understand?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. From time to time, I will probably
22 take breaks during the deposition. If you need
23 a break, just let your attorney know or let me
24 know and I will do my best to accommodate your
25 request. But I do ask that if a question is

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1 pending, if I've asked you a question and you
2 have not yet answered it, that you answer my
3 question before we take a break.

4 Is that okay?

5 A. Yes.

6 MR. BERGER: That may be okay
7 with the witness but, of course, consistent
8 with the local rules, if we have an issue of
9 privilege, we are entitled to take a break and
10 discuss whether there is an appropriate
11 privilege objection.

12 MR. SINAIKO: Of course.

13 That's the only exception.

14 BY MR. SINAIKO:

15 Q. Okay. Within the last 72 hours,
16 have you ingested any substance that would
17 impair your ability to understand and respond
18 to questions?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Are you currently under the
21 influence of any such substance?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Is there any reason that you can
24 think of, as we sit here now, that you would
25 not be able to give your -- let me withdraw

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1 that.

2 Is there any reason, as you sit here
3 today, you can think of as to why you would not
4 be able to give your best testimony today?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Now, as we go through the questions,
7 I will be referring at times to the Defendants.
8 When I refer to the Defendants, that is
9 intended by me, and I hope will be understood
10 by you, to encompass both the Palestinian
11 Authority and the Palestine Liberation
12 Organization.

13 Do you understand?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And at times, I may refer to the
16 Palestinian Authority as just the PA. Will
17 that be all right?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Thank you.

20 And at times, I will refer to the
21 Palestine Liberation Organization as PLO. Will
22 that be all right?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And then, there will be times when I
25 refer to the Permanent Observer Mission of the

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1 State of Palestine to the United Nations, and I
2 will just refer to that as the Observer
3 Mission. Will that be okay?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Just to save time. It's a mouthful.

6 Okay. Can we put up Tab No. 1,
7 please. I would ask the court reporter to mark
8 this as Exhibit 1.

9 (Deposition Exhibit No. 1 was
10 marked for identification.)

11 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: Mr.
12 Sinaiko, for the video record, do you want to
13 see the witness and the document or just the
14 witness?

15 MR. SINAIKO: I would like to
16 see the witness and the document. That will be
17 fine.

18 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: Okay.
19 Thank you.

20 BY MR. SINAIKO:

21 Q. Ambassador Abdelhady-Nasser, have
22 you seen this document previously?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And what -- when did you see this
25 document?

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1 A. My lawyer showed it to me yesterday.

2 Q. Okay. And was that the first time
3 you saw it?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. What do you understand this document
6 to be?

7 MR. BERGER: If you have an
8 understanding.

9 THE WITNESS: I understand
10 that this is the basis of the deposition or
11 requiring my deposition.

12 BY MR. SINAIKO:

13 Q. All right. You understand that this
14 is a notice for your deposition today; correct?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. And do you understand -- is it your
17 understanding that you are testifying today
18 pursuant to this notice?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And let me ask you, did you do
21 anything, in advance of today, to prepare for
22 your deposition?

23 A. I met with my lawyer.

24 Q. Apart from meeting with your lawyer,
25 did you do anything else to prepare for your

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1 deposition today?

2 A. I reviewed my calendar of
3 activities.

4 Q. And did you review any documents
5 other than your calendar of activities?

6 A. I reviewed the deposition of my
7 Senior Ambassador Mansour.

8 Q. So you looked at the transcript of
9 Dr. Mansour's testimony; is that correct?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. And did you look at any documents,
12 apart from your calendar and the transcript of
13 Dr. Mansour's deposition, in advance of your
14 testimony today?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Apart from looking at the documents
17 we just described and meeting with your lawyer,
18 did you do anything else to prepare for your
19 deposition today?

20 A. I tried to go to sleep early.

21 Q. Probably a good idea. Anything
22 apart from that?

23 A. It didn't work. No.

24 Q. Okay. And in advance of your -- in
25 advance of your deposition today, did you have

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1 any conversations with Mr. Mansour --
2 withdrawn.

3 In advance of your deposition today,
4 did you have any conversations with Dr. Mansour
5 about your testimony that you would be giving
6 today?

7 A. Only that I would have to give a
8 deposition on July 22nd.

9 Q. And when did you say that to
10 Dr. Mansour?

11 A. When I was informed by one of my
12 lawyers, Joseph Alonzo, that my deposition was
13 set for the 22d of July, so that I could inform
14 him that I would not be on duty that day.

15 Q. All right. And apart from telling
16 Dr. Mansour that you would be testifying here
17 today on -- you know, today, July 22nd, did you
18 say anything else to Dr. Mansour or did
19 Dr. Mansour say anything else to you during
20 this conversation concerning your deposition or
21 his?

22 A. No. He just wished me luck.

23 Q. Fair enough. Okey-doke.

24 Now, you said some time ago that, in
25 addition to looking at documents, in addition

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1 to speaking with -- speaking, albeit briefly,
2 with Dr. Mansour, you also met with your
3 lawyer. When you say you met with your lawyer,
4 who are you referring to?

5 A. I am referring to Mitch Berger and a
6 phone call with Joseph Alonzo, or two phone
7 calls with Joseph Alonzo, for arranging times
8 for the deposition.

9 Q. So with respect to Mr. Alonzo, did
10 you have any substantive conversations with him
11 concerning your deposition apart from a
12 conversation for scheduling?

13 A. He was with me in the last session
14 with Mr. Berger.

15 Q. Got it. Okay. And when was the
16 first time you had a substantive conversation,
17 and I'm not -- I don't want to get into the
18 substance of the conversations, I just want to
19 know when was the first time you had a
20 substantive conversation with Mr. Berger and/or
21 Mr. Alonzo about your testimony here today?

22 A. About two weeks ago.

23 Q. And how many times would you say,
24 over the last two weeks, you met with Mr.
25 Berger or Mr. Alonzo to discuss your testimony

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1 here today?

2 A. Including the first meeting, three
3 times.

4 Q. Three times?

5 A. Including today.

6 Q. Oh, got it. Okay.

7 A. Four times including today.

8 Q. Okay. So there were three meetings
9 over the last two weeks to discuss your
10 testimony here today; correct?

11 A. Uh-huh. Yes.

12 Q. And the first meeting you say
13 happened, approximately, two weeks ago?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Do you have the date of that
16 meeting?

17 A. I have it in my calendar. I don't
18 know the exact date right now.

19 Q. And what was the duration of that
20 meeting?

21 A. It was about two hours.

22 Q. And were -- and both Mr. Berger and
23 Mr. Alonzo participated in that meeting?

24 A. No. Just Mr. Berger.

25 Q. And during this two-hour meeting

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1 with Mr. Berger about two weeks ago, did
2 Mr. Berger show you any documents?

3 A. No. We just reviewed my calendar.

4 Q. Okay. So did you have the calendar
5 in front of you while you were there?

6 A. I had a printed version of my
7 calendar with me.

8 Q. Were there any other documents that
9 you reviewed with Mr. Berger during this
10 initial meeting about two weeks ago?

11 A. No.

12 Q. And after this initial meeting about
13 two weeks ago with Mr. Berger, when was the
14 next time you met with one or both of
15 Mr. Berger and Mr. Alonzo to discuss your
16 deposition today?

17 A. On Tuesday, July the 20th.

18 Q. And on Tuesday, July the 20th, how
19 long -- did you meet with them or was that a
20 telephone call?

21 A. It was a virtual meeting with
22 Mr. Berger.

23 Q. Mr. Berger only?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And during that meeting, did

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1 Mr. Berger show you any documents?

2 A. No. We discussed the same documents
3 that we had previously discussed, that I had
4 electronic versions of.

5 Q. Just your calendar?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. And that's the calendar that was
8 produced in discovery, you understand that to
9 be the case?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And after this meeting on the 20th,
12 when was the next time -- I guess the next time
13 would have been yesterday; is that right?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. And who participated in that
16 meeting?

17 A. Mr. Berger and Mr. Alonzo.

18 Q. What was the duration of that
19 meeting?

20 A. About an hour.

21 Q. And the meeting on Tuesday, what was
22 the duration of that one?

23 A. About two and a half hours.

24 Q. Got it. And the meeting, during the
25 meeting yesterday, or the virtual meeting

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1 yesterday with Mr. Berger and Mr. Alonzo, did
2 you review any documents with them?

3 A. The Notice of Deposition and the
4 calendars.

5 Q. Okay. And no other documents; those
6 are the only ones?

7 A. Yes. That is correct.

8 Q. Ambassador Abdelhady-Nasser, have
9 you ever testified, before today, in any
10 deposition or court proceeding of any kind?

11 A. No, I have not.

12 Q. Are you a citizen of the United
13 States?

14 A. Yes, I am.

15 Q. Are you a natural born citizen?

16 A. Yes, I am.

17 Q. And where do you currently reside?

18 A. I reside in New Jersey.

19 Q. And the residence that you currently
20 have in New Jersey, has that been your
21 residence at all times on and after January 4th
22 of 2020?

23 A. Yes, it has.

24 Q. Have you had any other residences,
25 apart from the one in New Jersey, at any time

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1 on or after January 4th of 2020?

2 A. I have visited other residences.

3 Q. But not -- places where you resided,
4 that's all I'm talking about.

5 A. Yeah. I live in New Jersey, in
6 Ridgefield, New Jersey.

7 Q. Okey-doke. Convenient.

8 MR. SINAIKO: If we could take down
9 this document and put up Tab 4, which I would
10 like to mark as Exhibit 2.

11 (Deposition Exhibit No. 2 was
12 marked for identification.)

13 BY MR. SINAIKO:

14 Q. Now, by the way, if at any time,
15 Ambassador Abdelhady-Nasser, you would like to
16 look at any other part of this document or any
17 document that we show you, just ask and I can
18 arrange for Cosette to turn the pages in
19 whatever way would be helpful to you. Is that
20 all right?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Great. This document that we just
23 put in front of you and marked as Deposition
24 Exhibit No. 2, do you recognize that?

25 A. Yes, I do.

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1 Q. What do you recognize that document
2 to be?

3 A. It is my LinkedIn profile.

4 Q. And turning to the second page of
5 the document, it says here that you received a
6 Bachelor's degree from New York University, in
7 1992, in political science and international
8 relations.

9 Is that correct?

10 A. Yes, that is correct.

11 Q. And above that, it says that you
12 received a Master of Arts degree from Rutgers
13 University in 2000 in the area of educational
14 leadership and administration; is that correct?

15 A. Yes. That is correct.

16 Q. And --

17 MR. BERGER: Just for a clear
18 record, Steve, the actual question you asked is
19 whether that's on the page. I assume you want
20 to confirm --

21 MR. SINAIKO: I was just
22 getting to that. Sorry for talking over you,
23 Mitch. I do understand that and I was actually
24 going to come right back to it.

25 MR. BERGER: I apologize.

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1 MR. SINAIKO: No apologies
2 needed. I appreciate the assistance.

3 BY MR. SINAIKO:

4 Q. Now that we have established what's
5 on the page, are those two entries on your
6 LinkedIn profile accurate? Did you receive the
7 degree from New York University and the degree
8 from Rutgers that are reflected on Page 2 of
9 your LinkedIn profile?

10 A. Yes, I did.

11 MR. SINAIKO: Excellent. All
12 right. Cosette, could we go back to Page 1,
13 please?

14 BY MR. SINAIKO:

15 Q. Looking at Page 1, do you see there
16 is an entry there that says experience?

17 A. Uh-huh. Yes.

18 Q. Underneath that, it says,
19 Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Observer of the
20 State of Palestine to the United Nations.

21 Do you see that?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Underneath that it says, May 2013.
24 Do you see that?

25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Is it accurate that you currently
2 hold the title Ambassador, Deputy Permanent
3 Observer of the State of Palestine to the
4 United Nations?

5 A. Yes, that is correct.

6 Q. And is it accurate that you have
7 held that position at all times since May 2013?

8 A. Yes, that is correct.

9 Q. And who appointed you to that
10 position?

11 A. I was promoted to that position by
12 Ambassador Mansour, and it was approved by the
13 President.

14 Q. When you say "the President," you
15 mean Mr. Abbas?

16 A. Yes. President Mahmoud Abbas.

17 Q. Okay. Now, on or after January 4 of
18 2020, have you worked for any organization,
19 other than the Permanent Observer Mission of
20 Palestine to the United Nations?

21 A. No, I have not.

22 Q. Have you been involved with or have
23 you held -- have you been involved in any other
24 business entity, other than the Permanent
25 Observer Mission of Palestine to the United

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1 A. I think her name was Mary Louise
2 Kelly.

3 Q. And was that the -- is that the --
4 let me withdraw and try again.

5 Was that the only time you have been
6 interviewed by a member of the media during
7 2021?

8 A. That is correct.

9 MR. SINAIKO: Bring up Tab 20,
10 please. I would like to mark this as our next
11 exhibit. I think it will be Exhibit 7.

12 THE COURT REPORTER: I must
13 have missed 6, then.

14 MR. SINAIKO: Exhibit 6 was
15 the updated privilege log, I think.

16 (Deposition Exhibit No. 7 was
17 marked for identification.)

18 BY MR. SINAIKO:

19 Q. So this is -- I will just, for the
20 record, I'll just mention what it is. We are
21 going to mark as Exhibit 7, document titled
22 Palestinian Official Discusses How the UN Can
23 Help End Violence in Israel and Gaza.

24 Do you see that, Ambassador
25 Abdelhady-Nasser?

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1 A. Yes, I do.

2 Q. Do you see that that's dated May 19,
3 2021?

4 A. Yes, I do.

5 Q. And, again, if you would like to
6 turn the pages of the thing, I would be happy
7 to do it. Just let us know and Cosette can do
8 that for you.

9 I would like to know whether you
10 agree that this is a transcript of the
11 interview you gave to Mary Louise Kelly, on NPR
12 Radio, on May 19, 2021.

13 MR. BERGER: Let's see the
14 other pages, please.

15 MR. SINAIKO: Certainly. As I
16 said, she is welcome to look at the pages, as
17 many of them as she likes for as long as she
18 likes. I mean, there aren't that many.

19 THE WITNESS: Okay.

20 BY MR. SINAIKO:

21 Q. So are we in agreement that that's
22 an accurate transcription of your interview, on
23 May 19, 2021, with Mary Louise Kelly of
24 National Public Radio?

25 A. Yes, it appears to be so.

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1 Q. And at the time you participated in
2 this interview, where were you located?

3 A. I was at home.

4 Q. And you were participating in this
5 interview because Ambassador Mansour was
6 unavailable; correct?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. Do you recall why Ambassador Mansour
9 was unavailable?

10 A. He had another engagement that
11 afternoon.

12 Q. Here in New York; correct?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. And you participated in this
15 interview in your capacity as Deputy Permanent
16 Observer at the Observer Mission; correct?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. And one of your purposes in this
19 interview was to advocate for the Palestinian
20 cause; correct?

21 A. It was to engage on the efforts to
22 bring an end to the hostilities, to the
23 violence that had erupted in May.

24 Q. And in connection with that, was it
25 your goal to advocate for the Palestinian

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA)
) SS
COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY)

CERTIFICATE

I, Karen A. Nickel, a notary public in and for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby certify that the witness, FEDA ABDELHADY-NASSER, was by me first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; that the foregoing deposition was taken at the time and place stated herein; and that the said deposition was recorded stenographically by me and then reduced to typewriting under my direction, and constitutes a true record of the testimony given by said witness.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee or attorney of any of the parties, or a relative or employee of either counsel, and that I am in no way interested directly or indirectly in this action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office this 25th day of July 2021.



Karen A. Nickel, Notary Public
Registered Professional Reporter
Certified Realtime Reporter

7/22/2021

Palestinian Official Discusses How The U.N. Can Help End Violence In Israel And Gaza : NPR



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Palestinian Official Discusses How The U.N. Can Help End Violence In Israel And Gaza

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Heard on All Things Considered



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NPR's Mary Louise Kelly talks with Feda Abdelhady, the Palestinians' deputy permanent observer to the U.N., about how the United Nations can help end the violence in Israel and Gaza.

MARY LOUISE KELLY, HOST:

What is the role of the United Nations in trying to bring about a cease-fire in the Middle East? Diplomats have been meeting. But the U.S. has vetoed any formal reaction by the Security Council, so the meetings continue. We're going to bring in one of the Palestinian officials engaged in those talks. Feda Abdelhady is the Palestinians' deputy permanent observer to the U.N., and she is on the line now. Ambassador, welcome.

FEDA ABDELHADY: Thank you for having me.

KELLY: Is it fair to say the United Nations is paralyzed?



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ABDELHADY: At the moment, the United Nations Security Council is paralyzed. Many countries at the U.N. have been mobilized in the past 10 days, in particular regarding the crisis that has engulfed the occupied Palestinian territory and the Palestinian people as a whole. But the council itself remains paralyzed due to the position of the United States on the council that has not allowed it to speak with one voice, to express itself or to undertake any action to respond to this crisis situation.

KELLY: OK. So let's dig in on this - on the U.S. position. As we noted, the U.S. has so far blocked any statement from the Security Council condemning the violence. The U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Linda Thomas-Greenfield, says the U.S. is - and I'll quote - "working tirelessly through diplomatic channels to try to bring an end to the conflict." Do you disagree that quiet, behind-the-scenes diplomacy might be effective here?

ABDELHADY: We think that quiet, behind-the-scenes diplomacy is necessary and particularly when human lives are at stake. But we don't see a contradiction between international action through the Security Council, which is mandated by the U.N. charter to maintain international peace and security and has adopted multiple resolutions on the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict and therefore can contribute to the effort. We don't see behind-the-scenes diplomatic efforts and Security Council efforts as contradictory to those efforts. They are not mutually exclusive but, in fact, can be complementary.

KELLY: Although, practically speaking, what would be the impact of a statement condemning the violence? Realistically, would you expect that to actually cause either party on the ground to stop shooting?

ABDELHADY: I think that there is more to what diplomats at the U.N. are trying to do than just to simply condemn an action. These actions that are being undertaken are in violation of international law. Israel is an occupying power. But beyond that, it's about prescribing action that can bring an end to the violence, that can protect civilian lives and that can contribute towards a just solution to this decadeslong injustice. And we also cannot underestimate the power that these expressions from the Security Council have, whether it is to the aggressor or to the occupied population. There is a need for

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the Palestinian people to hear that the international community sees and understands their pain and is responding to it.

KELLY: So you're saying the messaging can play an important role, even if it is not binding on the ground?

ABDELHADY: I think the messaging can certainly play an important role, and that includes also in sending a message to Israel that its actions are not condoned but rather condemned and that there will be consequences for noncompliance with international law and for its continued violation of human rights.

KELLY: Circling back to the meetings, the whole U.N., the General Assembly will meet again tomorrow, and it's the conflict in the Middle East that's on the agenda. What are you hoping to come out of that?

ABDELHADY: The General Assembly meeting tomorrow has been called for by many member states in order to express themselves on the Palestine question and to call for the implementation of countless U.N. resolutions, including resolutions that have called for protection of the Palestinian civilian population. Those resolutions have never been implemented. The General Assembly will come together tomorrow to collectively address this issue and has the right and the duty to do so.

KELLY: Ambassador, thank you.

ABDELHADY: Thank you.

KELLY: Feda Abdelhady is the Palestinian's deputy permanent observer at the United Nations. And I want to note elsewhere on the show, we hear from Israel's former ambassador to the U.S.

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